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NEWSLINE RADIO - CBBS EDITION #108 - POSTED 01/22/94

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The following is late news about Amateur Radio for Radio Amateurs as prepared from NEWSLINE RADIO scripts by the staff of the AMATEUR RADIO NEWSLINE, INC. -- formerly the WESTLINK RADIO NETWORK. The electronic version of newsline is posted on this CBBS twice monthly. For current information updates, please call

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For further information about the AMATEUR RADIO NEWSLINE, please write to us with an SASE at P.O. Box 463, Pasadena, CA 91102.

Thank You
NEWSLINE

Some of the hams of NEWSLINE RADIO...

WA6ITF WB6MQV WB6FDF K6DUE W6RCL N6AHU N6AWE N6TCQ K6PGX N6PNY
KU8R N8DTN W9JUV KC9RP K9XI KB5KCH KC5UD KC0HF G8AUU WD0AKO DJ0QN
and many others in the United States and around the globe!!!

[858]

* * * * C L O S E D C I R C U I T A D V I S O R Y * * * *
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* The following is a closed circuit advisory and is not for *
* air over ham radio. Repeat, not for broadcast. This is just *
* a reminder that the address for the Newsline Support Fund is *
* Newsline, in care of Dr. Norm Chalfin, K6PGX, Post Office *
* Box 463, Pasadena, CA 91102. Again, and as always, we thank *
* you. That ends the closed circuit with Newsline report *
* number 858 for release on Friday January 21, 1994. *
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The following is a QST

Californians are awakened to one of the biggest quakes in history. As usual, Amateur Radio plays a key role in health and welfare.

CALIFORNIA QUAKE '94

At 4:31 am a tremor of tremendous magnitude rocked the Los Angeles basin. Almost immediately, communications in and out of the nations second largest city became nearly impossible. Phone networks and other traditional means of communications became overloaded and useless. But, as usual, years of training resulted in amateur radio coming to the rescue in one of the most heroic stories in the history of our hobby.

"The wake up call came at 4:31 am last Monday morning and within seconds Los Angeles area hams had already swung into action. The quake was centered in the San Fernando Valley just northwest of Los Angeles. First came the work of the Public Seismic Network. A collection of hams and amateur seismologists who meet weekly on the air to compare data collected against actual seismic events. When an area event occurs, they collect felt reports on the air. And can often locate the general area of the quake within minutes by this method.

Handling this flood of calls, some under very difficult conditions, was Dorothy Darby, N6ZNC. Within the first half hour following the quake the Los Angeles RACES Organization known as the Disaster Communications Service was on the air from many of the Sheriffs stations in the area. Providing interagency communications between county sheriff, fire and the city organizations, as well as area hospitals and shelters. This reporter being the District Communications Officer for the Cresenta Valley Sheriffs Station was kept busy providing operators for that location which works with the cities of Pasadena, Glendale, and Burbank. The Glendale operators had their own set of problems, as the parking structure at the police station, where the emergency operations center is located, had collapsed destroying a number of city vehicles in the process.

The hams responding to the city of San Fernando facility found it without power mains and generator power. And ended up rigging a handheld to the stations rooftop antenna. As we go to air hams are still on duty throughout the Los Angeles Basin keeping the lines of communications open. And this particular ham got reminded on more than one occasion of his phonetics, Tiny California Quake." Andy Jarema, K6TCQ.

"Santa Clarita, CA, a city that few of you had heard of until now, when this quake put it on the map. This is a community that has been cut off from the rest of Los Angeles after the collapse of the Highway 14 overpass onto Interstate 5. There was no power for twenty one hours. Telephone service, especially out of state calling is still sporadic. Except for ham radio, Santa Clarita was a community isolated from the city to the south.

I got a chance to see the devastation of the Northridge quake first hand as I drove into work on Tuesday afternoon. A trip that normally takes only 40 minutes dragged on for the better part of four and a half hours. As I sat bumper to bumper on a single lane road that parallels Interstate 5, the destructive force of this quake was evident to everywhere you looked. Highways torn apart. Twisted rebar. Mashed concrete.

But we Angelenos seem to accept this type of natural fury as being a part of the price we have to pay to live here. So, as I inched my way into the city I also scanned the three most heavily used VHF and UHF bands in the area.

Many repeaters normally alive with chatter were silent. They were victims of being on remote mountaintops that had lost power. But other channels were alive. Repeaters whose owners had been smart enough to install battery or solar power to take over when city power failed. Each was loaded with some sort of quake related traffic. 147.705 was dedicated to working with the Red Cross and still is. 146.79 was holding forth with Santa Clarita Valley Emergency Communications. 224.52 and 224.58 were providing road closure information. 224.52 was also making its autopatch available for health and welfare calls. The number of repeaters taking part is list far to long to report here. These are just a few that I heard personally.

Later in the afternoon I used the ham station at work to scan the high frequency bands. Emergency communications nets were everywhere on 75, 40 and 20 meters. Most were associated with the ARRL'S Amateur Radio Emergency Service. Each was handling a myriad of health and welfare messages into and out of the Los Angeles Metro Area.

As we go to air, many of these nets are still on the air. Telephone service is returning to normal and many amateur radio assistance operations will soon be winding down. But the ongoing aftershocks of the Northridge quake are a constant reminder of what it costs to live here in the southland, and it's why being a ham can be vital to your very survival." Bill Pasternak, WA6ITF.

As we go to air, the California earthquake story is still emerging. We'll keep you updated in future Newsline reports.

AMSAT-NA OPPOSES FCC "INSTANT LICENSING" PROPOSAL

AMSAT-North America says it does not want to see an instant ham license in the United States. The ham radio space research organization has filed comments with the FCC in opposition to the instant licensing proposal contained in a Notice of Proposed Rule Making, PR Docket 93.267.

Under the FCC's proposal, unlicensed persons who pass an amateur license examination for the first time would immediately

be permitted to operate for up to 120 days. This, using self-assigned call signs, while waiting for their licenses to arrive.

But in its opposition filing, AMSAT cited the potential for abuse by persons who have no intention of taking a ham radio test and want to be able to bootleg without being noticed. It also says that it will be impossible to verify the self-assigned calls since they would not be registered in any data base.

AMSAT very strongly believes that the guaranteed anonymity of a self-assigned call sign system would multiply the potential for interference by unlicensed persons with amateur radio operation. This the organization says is particularly relevant to the Amateur satellite service because the 2-meter, 10-meter and 70-cm bands, which presently contain the most popular satellite uplinks and downlinks, are also among the most likely to be affected by such interference. They say that the international nature of ham radio satellite operation means that problems could be caused for amateurs, and governmental authorities, in other countries as well as in the United States.

As an alternative to instant licensing, AMSAT urges the FCC to pursue the use of electronic filing and processing of amateur license applications. This is the same position that has been taken by the American Radio Relay League.

ARRL BOARD MEETS

The American Radio Relay League's Board of Directors is holding its first annual meeting of 1994 in a very chilly Hartford, Connecticut as this newscast is going to air. The board is expected to take action on a number of important matters including the FCC proposal for a vanity call sign assignment system. Tune into Newsline for a full report on ARRL board actions next week.

VANITY CALL DOCKET

The text of the NPRM in Personal Radio Docket 93-305, dealing with the Commission's proposed Vanity Call Sign program, is available electronically on America Online, Compuserve, Genie, BIX and the National Video Network. On most of these services the file is named vanity with a possible file extension designator attached.

The same information is also available over Internet from the ARRL information file server. To obtain it, simply send a message over Internet to infoarrl.org that says only send FCC-93-305. That's infoarrl.org and the message must only read SEND

FCC-93-305.

The file is also available for downloading from the ARRL bulletin board at 203-666-0578 with the file name vanity. It will be printed in February issue of QST magazine.

STROKE CW

When a ham in Fargo, North Dakota suffered a stroke, he lost almost all ability to communicate. His voice was gone, and he was immobilized. But he could tap out morse code with his finger and that gave him hope. It became the job of Paul Linnell, WQOM to make known the thoughts and needs of Kurt Hall, W0AZV.

"The first time I was up to see him we tried communicating by having Kurt tap out CW on my hand and on my arm and also by trying to squeeze my hand. Because he was so weak, it was very difficult to make a whole lot of sense out of the CW that he sending, but he did let us know that he could communicate.

So my second trip up I brought along a straight key and a little oscillator. I knew we were in for a problem when Kurt, when he got a hold of the key wanted to move it sideways. I then thought he was used to a bug. He immediately sent out the word bug on the straight key so I knew we were going to have some problems. Kurt is right handed and here he was laying in the hospital bed trying to send with his left hand. Also being very weak from the stroke and he was still able to send my call and his call. And even when I left that day sent 73 so when knew he was able to communicate." Paul Linnell, WQOM.

Newsline joins with the amateur radio community of Fargo, North Dakota a full and speedy recovery.

ISRAEL ACCEPTS CEPT LICENSE

From overseas, word that Israel has joined the move toward a world-wide universal ham radio license. IK1PHC reports that the Israeli Ministry of Post and Telecommunications has accepted CEPT recommendation TR 61-01. This means that any ham who holds a license in any nation that is a signatory to the CEPT agreement can freely operate an amateur station in Israel without asking for a reciprocal permit. No effective date of the change has been announced.

UK SCANNER STING

For the second time in less than a year, authorities in the United Kingdom have again tuned the tables on scanner enthusiasts

who eavesdrop on emergency service radio channels. This, by issuing a false distress call and then arresting those who showed up on the scene.

As 1993 drew to a close South Yorkshire police launched the undercover sting after finding evidence that criminals were cashing in on information that they intercepted over the airwaves. As they did last spring, police dispatchers broadcast a phony report that aliens were invading earth and had been spotted in a nearby town. Yes, aliens, as in little green men from Mars, and the like.

Anyhow, reports are that several people who showed up at the address given in the bulletin. They were arrested at the scene and charged with acting illegally on information broadcast in an official police radio channel.

Under British law it is not illegal for scanner buffs to eavesdrop on emergency communications. It is against the law to take any action based on any information that might be heard.

A similar sting last year in central London netted more than a dozen scanner addicts who showed up at the site of another supposedly downed alien spaceship. All were forced to pay heavy fines and a few of them actually did jail time.

AMSAT AUSTRIA TO MEET

The first ever meeting of AMSAT-Austria will take place Saturday, April 16th at the Technical High School of Electronic and Telecommunication in Innsbruck. The main goals of the gathering are to present papers about basic amateur satellite technology along with seminar sessions dealing with modes-s operation, analysis of telemetry and other assorted topics. The preliminary list of lecturers includes I2KBD, ON6UG, DG2CV, OE1VKW and OE1WDC. All satellite users are welcome to attend this one-day meeting. For further information you can contact OE7FTJ at his callbook address.

SUPERBALL RISES, THEN FALLS

Superball 94, the Utah balloon carrying amateur radio telemetry and an amateur television camera had a life of about three hours. The launch of Superball took place Friday, January 7th, at 16:26 UTC. The balloon initially headed northeast as expected. Telemetry was copied on both 2 and 15 meters, and ATV sent back video of the balloon.

But then Superball began to change course as it came out of the Troposphere. At about 18:04 UTC the balloon unexpectedly burst. A quick drop in the differential pressure from 1.11 to

1.03 was one of the first clues that something had changed radically. Hams in eastern Utah actually watched the rupture on ATV and later saw the parachute deploy. Telemetry on 15 meters was copied in Ohio with an signal report of 579 after the package came to rest.

The landing site is in Utah's Uinta Mountains in the neighborhood of Wolf Creek Summit, a 9500-foot pass. Plans are to locate and retrieve the payload with the help of snowmobiles and the Wasatch County Search and Rescue Team as weather permits.

LA BEACON OUT

In DX, several sources report that the LA7DFA beacon has not been active from Jan Mayen since last April. LA7DFA himself says that he is looking for a rig to install permanently as beacon transceiver at the club station. He says that they also need a linear and a rugged yagi for the bad weather. LA7DFA plans to return to there in April 94 and hopes to have this equipment to take with him.

GHANA

Also, XT2BW is now active from Burkina Faso but will be leaving at the end of January to spend a few months on vacation with his family in Ghana. He says that he will apply for a licence and will be active when time permits. QSL him via WB2YQH.

GORDO

Famed ham radio instructor Gordon West, WB6NOA, says that he is now available to speak at your club meeting, hamfest, banquet or what have you. Gordo says that he has been able to rearrange his hectic personal appearance schedule so as to permit him to accept even more invitations from yacht clubs, ham radio clubs, SWL groups and other personal radio organizations.

West says that he requires a minimum of 90 days lead time for such appearances, and has talks available on a wide variety of subjects including Tropo Ducting, an Introduction to Radio Waves using laser light technology to demonstrate reflection and refraction, a presentation on the Global Positioning System, plus other interesting seminar sessions far to numerous to mention here. For more information on these interesting Gordon West, WB6NOA seminars and talks, contact Gordo at 2414 College Drive, Costa Mesa, CA 92626.

ORIENTEERING

Amateur radio will play a major role in a national contest taking place in central Alabama.

Hams are heading to the hills, literally. It's their way of helping during a championship orienteering meet taking place in Alabama's largest State Park.

"Basically orienteering is a sport involving following a course marked on a map through the forest. And whoever completes the course the fastest wins." Tom Lamb, N4OAJ.

Tom is counting on at least a dozen hams during the weekend of January 22nd. Contest checkin points are spreadout over a large area inside the park. With so many stations, so far apart, Lamb knows how valuable amateur radio will be to the events success.

"With courses spreading out through the forest, the longest course is about ten kilometers long, that is about six miles. We have a got a lot of people scattered in far places. So one of the ways that amateur radio ties in is helping us to organize much the way that a road race is organized. But a road race is normally is tied around a road so that things are planned closer together. We are a lot more spreadout. So amateur radio is going to help us organize the different areas like the start/finish, results and those sorts of things." Tom Lamb, N4OAJ.

As many as 200 participants from across the nation are expected for the orienteering championships. Lamb expects the event to run smoothly, thanks in part to the contributions of amateur radio operators.

The hams will be helping not just with routine communications, but with any emergencies that come up, as well.

For this week, that's all from the Amateur Radio Newsline. You can write to us at Post Office Box 463 in Pasadena, CA 91102.

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